

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SHOULD THE U.S. CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA?

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: SHOULD THE U.S. CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA?

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This strategic research project (SRP) addresses the U.S. policy of forward basing of forces in South Korea. Since the Korean War the U.S. has maintained forces in South Korea to deter an external attack on South Korean sovereignty. The fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War has enabled the United States to downsize its armed forces and, with the exception of South Korea, reduce its force presence overseas. The current administration's policy of fighting the global war on terrorism and transforming the military into a more expeditionary power will force strategists to determine where the U.S. can further economize its forward presence. This research project will attempt to answer the question: should the U.S. continue to maintain a Cold War-like deterrence in South Korea? The paper will examine the history of our commitment to South Korea, capabilities of South Korean and North Korean armed forces, and the intentions and threat posed by North Korea. The project will conclude with recommended changes, if any, to the forces based in South Korea and the diplomatic options the U.S. forces should consider to alleviate tension on the peninsula.

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SHOULD THE U.S. CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA?

Throughout the Cold War American policy makers struggled with the issue of maintenance of forces in Europe and South Korea. The American public has generally supported the forward deployment of forces to defend potential flash points in order to stem the tide of communism. The fall of the Soviet Union, marking the end of the Cold War, enabled the United States to downsize its armed forces and reduce its overseas presence. This was accomplished primarily through reduction of forces in Europe. There was no significant reduction of forces in South Korea. Perception of the North Korean threat appeared unaffected by the events overtaking its old ally, the Soviet Union. Therefore the United States continues to maintain a cold war-like deterrence force on South Korean soil.

BACKGROUND

After 1945, American policy makers devised two new policies toward Korea. The aims of both were directed toward a new Korean government that would maintain a good working relationship with America and that would maintain effective control over the whole Korean Peninsula.

The Korean War changed that focus. The Economic Cooperation Administration plan for South Korea was designed to enable Korea to rebuild its economic system. American policymakers considered the ECA plan the vehicle for the survival of South Korea and the containment of communism in the Free World. United States policy to align the Korean economy with the Japanese was created after the Korean War.

Following the 1953 Mutual Security Treaty, United States policy toward South Korea was amended again. In light of Japan's successful economic reconstruction and China's rise to power, American policymakers began to view South Korea as a buffer zone between the Communist World and the Free World. The 1953 Mutual Security Treaty committed the United States to the defense of South Korea from a North Korean Attack.

Consequently South Korea's military role was strengthened over time, while its economic role was deemphasized. Despite the fact that security continued to be stressed throughout the 1950s, the United States still tried to reduce grants and the size of the Korean and American forces in South Korea. Subsequently the 'unified policy' and the economic recovery plan were eliminated following the Korean War.¹

Today the United States' interests in South Korea encompass security, economic, and political concerns. The United States has remained committed to maintaining peace on the

Korean Peninsula. This commitment is viewed as vital to the peace and stability of Northeast Asia.

The United States currently maintains 37,500 troops in South Korea to supplement the 650,000-strong South Korean armed forces.² The purpose of these forces is to deter the 1.2 million-man North Korean army, which is forward deployed in the lower third of the country, along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Most of the American forces in Korea are forward-based Army personnel arrayed across the southern peninsula.

United States Policy Objectives toward South Korea rely on political stability in South Korea. The United States considers political stability crucial to South Korea's economic development, to maintenance of the security balance on the peninsula, and to preservation of peace in northeast Asia.³ A key factor in maintaining peace and stability in the region is keeping the Korean Peninsula free of weapons of mass destruction.

MILITARY CAPABILITY

The North Korean military relies on large numbers of missiles for strength. According to South Korean and United States military intelligence, North Korea maintains 600 to 750 missiles capable of striking targets in South Korea and Japan. The missiles, capable of delivering chemical, biological, and nuclear payloads, are kept in reinforced underground facilities. The missiles, mounted on mobile launchers, can move to dispersed firing points making their detection by South Korean and U.S. intelligence agencies difficult.

South Korean and United States intelligence estimates state that North Korea has 500 to 600 SCUD missiles, developed in the 1980s, that can range targets 150 to 300 miles away. In 1993 the North Koreans started testing the No Dong missile with a range of 800 miles capable of reaching Japan. On August 31, 1998, North Korea launched over Japan the first three-stage Taepo-Dong-1 missile that achieved an operating range of approximately 1,250 miles. The second stage crossed over the Japanese main island of Honshu and landed in the Pacific Ocean. The third stage, detected weeks later by United States intelligence agencies, broke into pieces and splashed down 3,450 miles down range.

North Korean conventional forces, aforementioned 1.2 million-man standing army, comprise the third largest army in the world. According to South Korean estimates, North Korean reserves could increase the fighting strength to 8 million. The North Korean army possesses approximately 3,700 tanks positioned throughout the country. North Korea maintains an air force consisting of about seven hundred 1960s era Soviet-built fighter jets that can range Seoul, as well as a small but historically aggressive navy.

To augment their ground forces, North Korea maintains a large number of rocket launchers and cannon artillery near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) capable of ranging Seoul. These weapon systems are also kept in underground facilities and are capable of delivering conventional, biological, and chemical munitions.

South Korea relies upon its very formidable ground force to defend against a North Korean attack. The Republic of Korea (ROK) army consists of three armies that share defense responsibilities on the peninsula. The First ROK Army (FROKA) defends the eastern section of the DMZ. The Second ROK Army (SROKA) is responsible for the defense of the rear from the rear of the front area to the southern, eastern, and western coast lines. The Third ROK Army (TROKA) defends the western section of the DMZ and guards the three most likely attack routes from North Korea to Seoul—the Munsan, Chorwon, and Tongduchon avenues of approach. Due to its paramount defense responsibilities, TROKA is the largest and most capable of the three armies.

The ROK army units consist of 11 corps, 50-plus divisions, and 20 brigades. Its 560,000 active duty troops man 2,200 main battle tanks, 4,850 artillery pieces, and 2,200 armored infantry vehicles. FROKA and TROKA's shared defense of the border is bolstered by their occupation of well-fortified battle positions stretching from the DMZ to positions fifty kilometers south. In addition, ROK can call up an additional 3.5 million reservists' to augment the active force.

The United States contribution to ROK ground forces is comparatively small. The total U.S. ground force forward based in South Korea consists of 37,500 troops comprising of elements of the U.S. Army 2nd Infantry Division. The division maintains two ground maneuver brigades (two armored battalions, two mechanized infantry battalions, and two light infantry battalions), an aviation brigade (cavalry squadron, attack battalion, and lift battalion), and division artillery consisting of four artillery battalions (two cannon battalions and two rocket battalions).⁴ The division units do not occupy battle positions and are spread out across 17 installations throughout TROKA area of operations.

The strength of the ROK defense structure lies in the combat power of their ground forces. If there is a weakness, it may be in the ROK military's inability to assume missions currently carried out by United States Forces, Korea (USFK). Although the ROK military has kept pace with improvements to weapons platforms, they have made less progress in making improvements to their command and control structure. This appears to be an obstacle to ROK assuming USFK missions. In a recent joint news conference with both United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and South Korea Minister of Defense Cho Yung Kil, plans were

announced to transfer 10 military missions from USFK to the ROK military⁵. Cho reported that the ROK military will have no problem assuming 8 of the 10 missions. He went on to state that ROK will need more time to take over the remaining two missions. The two missions in question are counter-battery fire against North Korean artillery units along the DMZ and security of the Joint Security Area (JSA) in Panmunjon. In their execution of both missions, U.S. forces rely on command and control systems to integrate intelligence sensors such as weapons locating radars, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and direct observation, to name a few. These command and control systems are crucial in developing and establishing an operating picture for the combatant commander. In order for the ROK military to successfully assume the remaining two missions without degradation in readiness, improvements in the area of command and control systems must be made. An investment in technology to improve ROK military command and control systems is essential to speed transition of missions from USFK to ROK responsibility.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

North Korea sustains a credible 1.2 million-man army, a small, but adequate navy, and an air force capable of causing serious damage to the South Korean capital. However, since the fall of the Soviet Union there has been little modernization of their fielded forces. The lack of modernization is mainly due to their dismal economy.

North Korea is a centrally planned, isolated economy facing desperate economic conditions. As a result of years of under-investment in industry and spare parts shortages in their industrial sector, North Korean capital stock is almost beyond recovery. The nation is enduring its ninth year of food shortages due to a lack of arable land, failures in collective farming, weather related problems, and chronic shortages in fertilizer and fuel. Massive international humanitarian assistance has kept the North Korean population from wide-spread starvation although poor living conditions and malnutrition exist. The regime's large scale military spending prevents adequate resources being invested into industrial improvements and civilian welfare.⁶

By comparison South Korea's economy is booming. The country has achieved unprecedented growth and integration into the information age global economy. Thirty years ago Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was comparable to some of the poorest countries in the world. Today South Korea's GDP per capita ranks 12th in the world and 20 times North Korea's GDP.⁷ South Korea's economy did suffer in the Asian financial crisis of

1997-99 but recovered by 2000. Despite the anemic global economy since the terrorist attacks in September, 2001, South Korea continues to show modest gains and a strong economy.

Economic factors are important to the long-run buildup and maintenance of military capability. A military capability requires a substantial amount of economic resources. In all societies there are competing demands for these economic resources; mainly for private consumption, private capital accumulation, and social capital accumulation. The larger the country's economic capacity, the more it can devote to these competing demands, the military being one of the demands, without causing unbearable political stress (as in the collapse of the Soviet Union). Traditionally a country's economic capacity is measured by Gross Domestic (or National) Product (GDP). The GDP is an estimate of the country's aggregate production of goods and services during a given time period. The higher the GDP the more likely it is for that country to build up and maintain an effective military capability for the long term.⁸

To measure the relative strength of a country's economy it is useful to compare Gross Domestic Product (GDP). North Korea ranks 98th in the world for GDP while South Korea ranks 11th. The next logical question to ask is how does this relate to the military? The percent of the GDP used by North Korea for military expenditures is the highest in the world. North Korea's military expenditures are the basis of their internal problems. In 2002 the regime spent 33.9 % of their GDP on the military. By comparison South Korea, in the same timeframe, spent 2.8% of their GDP on their military while the United States military spent 3.2% of their GDP on the military. What does this mean in real dollars? The table below shows a graphic comparison of North and South Korean economies. Although North Korea spends 33.9 percent of its GDP on the military, South Korea spend more on its military than the entire North Korean GDP.

Country	World Ranking	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in US dollars (USD)	Military Expenditures -% of GDP (amount in USD ⁹)
North Korea	98	22,000,000,000	33.9 (\$5,217,400,000-FY02)
South Korea	11	931,000,000,000	2.8 (\$13,094,300,000-FY02)
United States	1	10,400,000,000,000	3.2 (\$276.7 billion-FY99 est)
China	2	5,700,000,000,000	4.3 (\$55.91 billion-FY02)
Japan	3	3,550,000,000,000	1.0 (\$39.52 billion-FY02)

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF GDP AND MILITARY EXPEDITURES.¹⁰

Two additional points on the comparison table: 1) Although North Korea is a direct threat to South Korea, South Korea's military expenditure percent of GDP is lower than that of the

United States expenditure percent. American taxpayers may take issue with this in light of South Korea's booming economy, especially coupled with South Korea's rising anti-Americanism. 2) It is apparent that our engagement in that part of the world, particularly the Korean Peninsula, is of vital importance to the United States since South Korea is in close proximity to two of the world's largest economies, China and Japan.

THE REAL THREAT FROM NORTH KOREA

What is the real threat from North Korea? During congressional testimony in March 2001, General Thomas Schwartz, then U.S. Commander-in-Chief in Korea, reported that the North Korean military threat was growing. He based his report on the size of North Korea's forces, weaponry, and large number of exercises conducted in 2000. However, experts in both South Korea and the United States disputed General Schwartz's testimony on several points. The critics argued that North Korean conventional military capabilities had eroded since the early 1990s due to the obsolescence of offensive weaponry like tanks and strike aircraft, as well as to deficiencies in logistics/supplies and food shortages among even North Korean front-line troops on the DMZ. Also specified was the decline in the physical and mental capabilities of North Korean draftees after a decade of malnutrition. Finally, the absence of major field exercises from 1994 to 2000 was cited.¹¹

Since then, the military leadership in Korea has reassessed the threat from North Korea. General Leon LaPorte, current Commander of all United States forces in Republic of Korea, addressed the threat posed by North Korea in a recent interview on ABC-TV. During the interview he talked about the capability of the South Korea/ United States military in comparison to the capability of the North Korea military. LaPorte stated that "The Republic of Korea and the United States have tremendous military capabilities, far exceeding those of North Korea. The Republic of Korea (ROK) military is a very well-trained, well-led and disciplined force. They have a significant number of ground forces." LaPorte told the interviewer that North Korea's navy and air force are "minuscule compared to the ROK and U.S. Navy and Air Force." In discussing North Korea's capability he said the North Korean military is "an aging military, with older Soviet equipment and they have not been able to make the investment."¹²

When considering North Korean conventional threat versus ROK military capabilities that include a large ground force, one must ask, what is the military purpose of American ground forces forward deployed to South Korea? What more could the 37,000 United States forces contribute to a ground campaign conducted by 650,000-strong ROK force? Pundits reiterate

that the United States' major military contribution to South Korea in the event of hostilities will be in the form of naval and air forces, not ground forces.

Andrew Krepenevich, noted scholar and expert in foreign relations, approaches the issue in a more strategic context. In an article he wrote concerning America as a global power, he makes several predictions. He states that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology will likely demand an increasing share of United States defense resources for homeland defense. He maintains that this will leave less military capability available for forward presence. He argues that our policy should encourage allies to assume a larger role in providing ground forces for peacekeeping, urban control operations and regional conflicts. In the case of South Korea, this would not entail an increase of resources on the part of U.S. allies. "South Korea should be capable of effectively defending itself without major United States ground reinforcements."¹³

GROWING ANTI-AMERICANISM RELATED TO POLICY AND FORCE PRESENCE

Viewed from a peninsula security standpoint, with the growing obsolescence of the North Korean military, attention has shifted from the potential of a North Korean conventional attack to the implications of North Korea's quest to develop nuclear weapons and advanced missile systems as delivery means. To further complicate the issue, the United States and South Korea have divergent perceptions of the North Korean threat level. As a result the two nations are not in total agreement on the diplomatic efforts required to bring the crisis under control.¹⁴

A major sticking point for South Korea is the inclusion of North Korea on the United States Terrorist Countries List. South Korean officials urged American diplomats to soften their "hard line" stance with North Korea. Former South Korean President Kim called on the United States to support his sunshine policy by normalizing diplomatic relations with North Korea and urged the United States to remove North Korea from the terrorist list. This is important to South Korea because North Korea's removal from the terrorist list would open the way for North Korea to receive financial aid from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The divergence of perceptions between the United States and South Korea regarding the North Korean threat and diplomatic strategies to resolve the situation has resulted in erosion in relations between the two countries. In addition, the South Korean population's growing dissatisfaction with United States policy toward North Korea and presence of American forces in South Korea could negatively impact the nation's political stability. Since 1995 there has been an increasingly steady decline in favorable attitudes toward the United States. As recent as February 2003 the Department of State reported that 59% of the South Koreans think that their

country's relations with the United States are in poor shape. When polled to identify the concerns causing the rift, the people most often mentioned the American military presence in South Korea and United States policy on the North Korea nuclear issue.¹⁵

Anti-American sentiment has been expressed in the form of demonstrations, both peaceful and violent, outside United States military installations in Korea as well as attacks on off-duty American military personnel. A dramatic upsurge in anti-American violence began in the summer of 2002. The increased violence was the result of public outrage over a traffic accident in which two South Korean school girls, walking home from school, were tragically killed by a U.S. military vehicle during a training exercise. The South Korean population was further inflamed when the two soldiers implicated in the accident were exonerated by a military court. South Korean political groups rallied for demands ranging from immediate changes to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to expulsion of United States forces from South Korean soil.

Anti-American sentiment was so prevalent at that time that now-President Roh Moo-hyun campaigned and won the South Korean presidential election on an anti-American platform. During his political ascendancy, Roh suggested that his nation might "mediate" in any war between America and the North (Korea).¹⁶

Thomas C. Hubbard, U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, addressed the growing anti-American sentiment in a speech he gave to Korean News Editors Association. In his dialogue he highlighted the humanitarian efforts America is involved in around the globe and attempted to reinforce the idea that the United States and Korea possess common values. He went on the say that the "future of the alliance will be in the hands of the new generation of Koreans and American... The role of the U.S. played by sharing the burdens of the past with the Korean people doesn't resonate as strongly with them (twenty-year old man or woman) as the story about the tragic road accident involving USFK."¹⁷ Since most of the anti-American sentiment is generated from the younger Korean citizens, one has to wonder how much worse it will get as the Korean War falls further into the past.

The push to compel the United States to withdraw all forces from South Korea is gaining momentum in this country. Influential New York Times columnist, William Safire recently called for the withdrawal "because the U.S. is not an imperialist power, it does not belong where a democratic nation decides America is unwanted."¹⁸

Conservative writer Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute has renewed his effort demanding that the United States leave South Korea. Isolationist Patrick Buchanan has called on the United States. to break the alliance with South Korea.¹⁹

DIPLOMATIC OPTIONS

Richard Halloran, former correspondent for Business Week, The Washington Post, and The New York Times, currently a freelance journalist, describes and analyzes five options the Bush administration has in confronting these demands:

- Seek to retain the status quo with cosmetic changes to appease critics. This option has worked in the past. However, Halloran dismisses this plan. Given the emotional anti-Americanism that seems to be plaguing Korea today, this option is unlikely to satisfy the nationalistic South Koreans.
- Move the headquarters of U.S. forces from Seoul to the southern part of the Peninsula where it would be less visible. Today the headquarters sits on prime real estate in Seoul. This option has been and is under consideration. The U.S. has offered to move if the South Koreans would pay for it. The South Koreans have so far declined, but the current wave of anti-American demonstrations may make this a viable option.
- Level up the rhetoric and the reality of the U.S. alliance with South Korea to that of the U.S. alliance with Japan. Many Koreans are irked by their perception of America's favoritism toward Japan. For example, Koreans believe that the U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with Japan favors Japanese citizens more than the U.S. SOFA with South Korea favors its citizens. Halloran favors this option combined with option two. Leveling up the U.S. – Korea alliance would require a huge change in American thinking. Combined with moving the headquarters out of Seoul, this could be the start of a far more satisfactory alliance for both Americans and Koreans.
- Offer to negotiate a reduction of U.S. forces in Korea in return for a North Korean pullback of its forces from the vicinity of the DMZ. It is unlikely that this option would be considered by the Bush administration given the heightened suspicions between Washington and Pyongyang.
- Stage a unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces and abrogate the security treaty between Washington and Seoul. The South Koreans would be left to fend for themselves and would perhaps seek an alliance with China. Halloran cites this option as the least desirable alternative. He states that it would be "tantamount to surrender and a nonstarter all around."²⁰

SHOULD THE U.S. RESORT TO THE PREEMPTIVE STRIKE OPTION?

While the United States wrestles with military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il appears to be attempting to develop nuclear weapons as quickly as possible. Recent actions by the North Korean regime toward attaining nuclear weapons and developing more advanced missile delivery systems makes North Korea a likely candidate for the Bush administration's National Security Strategy pre-emptive strike option.

The success of three-stage No Dong missile program to achieve increasing ranges demonstrates North Korea's propensity to develop a weapon delivery system capable of threatening targets off the peninsula. According to the 1998 Rumsfeld Commission report, the North Korean's next-generation missiles, currently under development, could reach Hawaii, Alaska, and the United States' west coast.²¹ This report, coupled with the North Korean officials' proclamations "threatening to rain fire on U.S. cities,"²² could cause moderates in the government to seriously consider the pre-emptive strike option.

Another argument for a pre-emptive strike is the perceived benefits of successful military operations. A successful military operation would eliminate the North Korean nuclear capability, destroy its missile program, and possibly topple the Kim Jong Il regime. Successful military operations could set the conditions for a united Korea.

However the costs of striking in the near future far outweigh any potential benefits. The already tenuous relations between the United States and South Korea would deteriorate even further. When former South Korean president, Kim Dae-jung, initiated the Sunshine policy, a policy of reconciliation with North Korea, his government gained the widespread support of South Korean public. Additionally, public sentiment toward the United States soured and the current South Korean president, Roh Moo Hyun, won the 2002 election on an anti-American platform. If the U.S. were to conduct a pre-emptive strike into North Korea, we would most likely be acting unilaterally, diplomatic opposition would intensify and the United States would be seen as the aggressor by both the South Koreans and the global community. The United States internal political upheaval would increase dramatically. World-wide opinion would be negatively impacted and political alliances attempting to curtail American power would receive more support.

However the most compelling reason to refrain from exercising the pre-emptive strike option is the large number casualties that will result in such a conflict. The reality of a military strike would cause North Korea to retaliate. Since Seoul, with a population of over 17 million, is within North Korean artillery range, the number of non-combatant casualties would be horrendous. General Gary Luck, former commander of United States forces in Korea,

estimated that another Korean War would result in 1 million casualties-52,000 of those American.²³

Neither Richard Halloran's diplomatic options nor the blatantly militant pre-emption options should be entertained. There is a more viable option: a unilateral withdraw of United States ground forces from South Korea. The current administration's commitment to the global war on terrorism, with subsequent military deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, has caused considerable strain on the United States Military's finite resources. Service components, scrambling to meet the increased operational tempo of the current environment, have yet to realize the implications on retention and sustaining a quality force.

Withdrawal of forces from South Korea would enable the United States to realize an infrastructure cost savings while continuing to meet the guidance in the National Security Strategy and regional policy objectives that are inherent in forward basing of troops. It will also make available more forces for the administration's global war on terrorism. Additionally, the removal of American forces from South Korea would alleviate political unrest associated with the increasing anti-American sentiment among South Koreans.

Moving the headquarters from Seoul to the south will do little to stem the tide of growing anti-American sentiment. The source of anti-American feelings resides with the large amount of ground forces that operate and train on Korean soil, not the location of the headquarters.

Since South Korea has a large standing ground force, the presence of United States ground forces in South Korea is militarily inconsequential. The real threat from North Korea is their policy to develop nuclear weapons. U.S. ground forces are unnecessary to deter or defend against nuclear weapons. Additionally, the presence of US forces on South Korean soil is a major source of anti-American sentiment among the Korean population. This hostility cause political unrest on the peninsula.

United States' diplomatic efforts to end the North Korean nuclear weapon crisis are at odds with the South Korean diplomatic policy. The divergent views of the North Korean threat and diplomatic policies to alleviate it are causing friction between South Korea and the United States. To maintain our influence in South Korea, the U.S. needs to narrow the gap between our divergent perceptions.

Due to the degradation of North Korean conventional forces and in light of the recent North Korean policy of developing nuclear weapons, it is unlikely that North Korea would launch a conventional attack on South Korea. However, in the unlikely event of such an attack, South Korea with assistance from the U.S. Navy and Air Force, could defeat the attack. North Korea's policy to develop nuclear weapons is similar to the massive retaliation strategy of the 1950s

Eisenhower administrations. Both governments want to portray credible military strength to attain national interests at the lowest possible cost.

The Eisenhower Administration's policy wanted to decrease taxes and military spending in order to build a stronger U.S. economy. Reliance on a strategy of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons was much cheaper than maintaining large conventional forces. Unfortunately, as later events were to prove, this strategy resulted in the U.S. forces being unable to influence any struggle, short of a thermo-nuclear exchange, concerning a national interest. North Korea's policy is to gain concessions from U.S. and other regional powers to meet the objective of regime survival. Like the Eisenhower Administration, North Korea is pursuing a policy of relying on nuclear weapons to meet the nation's policy objectives because it is cheaper than maintaining a large standing army. This policy is probably contributing to the degradation of their conventional forces capability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WITHDRAW U.S. GROUND FORCES FROM SOUTH KOREA

Considering the capability of the ROK Military and the recent disparate demands on the United States military, the time is ripe to withdraw ground forces from South Korea. This course of action will enable the military to apply more resources toward the global war on terrorism. Furthermore, there will be inherent cost savings by withdrawing ground forces from South Korea. The American force structure currently in Korea could be deployed elsewhere (Afghanistan, Iraq, or Bosnia). Withdrawal of forces would eliminate the infrastructure cost of maintaining hundreds of individual camps required to forward base U.S. ground forces. Furthermore, the removal of U.S. ground forces would halt the progress of anti-American sentiment among the South Korean population.

MAINTAIN A STRONG COMBINED JOINT STAFF PRESENCE ON THE PENINSULA

To assure our South Korean allies of our commitment to the alliance and to the defense of South Korea, we must continue to maintain a strong Combined Joint Staff presence on the Peninsula. The purpose of the United States contribution on the staff would be to insure there is no degradation of readiness during the transfer of the ten agreed upon military missions from USFK to ROK. Moreover, to insure quality of effort, U.S. staff officers on Combined Joint Staff should be credible professionals with continued career potential.²⁴ Likewise, we must continue to forward base air force and intelligence assets to augment ROK security efforts. Finally, the

Combined Joint Staff in Korea should continuously update South Korea on United States armed forces transformation issues that may impact future deployment of forces to South Korea.

One concrete policy the United States must adopt is to insure that we maintain a one to one ratio of staff officers in the Combined Joint Headquarters. If the primary staff officer is Korean, the U.S. should assign him a deputy of equal rank if practical; a Korean should be the deputy when a U.S. officer is the primary staff officer.

PROVIDE NECESSARY MILITARY TRAINING AND ASSETS FOR SOUTH KOREA ASSUME ALL GROUND FORCE RESPONSIBILITY

USFK should share with the ROK military training and assets required to execute counter-battery and JSA missions. The Military Intelligence Brigade stationed in South Korea should remain in place to enable ROK military access to U.S. national reconnaissance assets. The U.S. should accommodate all reasonable ROK training requests and equipment transfers.

IMPROVE INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION CAPABILITY ON THE PENINSULA

Despite the recent criticism concerning the United States intelligence community's weakness in developing and establishing reliable human intelligence sources, the deficiencies in our technical collection capabilities are of even greater importance. When considering the threat that North Korea poses the United States needs to improve its technical collection capability. Finding out weeks after the launch that North Korea fired the No Dong missile at a range beyond 3400 miles is unacceptable. The United States must increase its research and development of technical intelligence collection to prevent future similar events from going unobserved. Recent events on the peninsula warrant the continued focus of substantial numbers of our national intelligence assets on North Korea.

Intelligence on the peninsula should be a shared ROK /U.S. responsibility. South Korea should take the lead in developing and sustaining human intelligence on the peninsula. The large number of North Korean defectors residing in South Korea should continue to be a valuable source of intelligence. The U.S. military intelligence brigade, with access to U.S. national intelligence assets, can integrate its collection efforts with the South Koreans to determine North Korean intentions.

RULE OUT PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AS A VIABLE OPTION TO SOLVE THE KOREA PROBLEM

The costs of conducting a pre-emptive strike would cause devastating loss of human life to both United States armed forces and American/ Korean non-combatants. Additionally the

United States would suffer diplomatic and economic retaliation from the global community. The support for alliances attempting to curb American power would increase.

IMPROVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA

To lighten the impact of removing ground forces the U.S. may have to make certain concessions to South Korea. One concession would be for the U.S. take a softer diplomatic approach to North Korea. The U.S. can appease the South by removing North Korea from the terrorist nation list. This strategy will not interfere with our policy objectives or damage the administration politically and will improve the South Korean population's public opinion of U.S. foreign policy.²⁵

Furthermore the Bush administration should consider rewriting the National Security Strategy as a less provocative document and eliminate the pre-emptive strike option. This removes any justification by North Korea for pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

CONTINUE TO INSIST ON MULTI-LATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH NORTH KOREA

The Bush Administration tactic of insisting on a multi-lateral dialogue to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program is smart diplomacy. History has shown that a credible unilateral agreement between U.S. and North Korea is impossible to achieve or enforce. U.S. unilateral enforcement of sanctions against North Korea helps stir anti-American sentiment. A multi-lateral agreement with China, Japan, and South Korea will have better results. In this way, when a multi-lateral agreement is reached and North Korea does not live up to its end of the bargain, it becomes a multi-nation problem not just U.S. problem.

EXERT DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE FOR ROK TO INCREASE DEFENSE SPENDING TO MAKE THE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS.

The first priority for South Korea is to assume the ten USFK missions as soon as possible. Current timeline will enable that to happen by Summer of 2005. With the 12th strongest economy on the globe under direct threat from the North, South Korea must spend more on its military.

CONCLUSION

In the foreseeable future the United States will continue to view the stability and security of the Korean Peninsula as a vital national security interest and integral to sustaining global commerce. Withdrawal of United States ground forces from South Korea will not degrade the military readiness of the alliance defense. On the contrary, it will eliminate one of the major sources of growing anti-Americanism among the South Korean population. Moreover, United

States can utilize ground forces that are re-deployed from the peninsula in the Global War on terrorism, and save the associated costs of forward based troops. For South Korea, with strong United States support, to take the lead in the defense of their nation is an idea whose time has come.

In conclusion, withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from South Korea would be a win-win alternative. We gain economic and military resources while maintaining our objectives in northeast Asia and garnering positive public opinion, and South Koreans step out of our shadow and join the first rank of nations as a fully functioning democratic nation in charge of its own national defense.

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⁶ From the CIA FACTBOOK, Economy section (updated 1 August 2003).

⁷ From the CIA FACTBOOK, Economy section and GDP tables (updated 1 August 2003).

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⁹ These are estimated U.S. dollar amounts derived from military expenditures-dollar figure table in the CIA FACTBOOK. When comparing the country's reported GDP and military expenditures as a percent of GDP from same reference one can derive a different amount of dollars for military expenditures. I can only speculate that the information was independently researched and different time periods were used. The point of the table however remains valid. (updated 1 August 2003).

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¹⁶ Bandow, Doug, "Time for a Korean Divorce," CATO Institute, www.cato.org/dailys/01-08-03.html, (January 8, 2003).

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²² Francisco, Michael. "The North Korea Problem: Preemptive nuclear strike, doves, hawks, and other options ", *The Evangel Society*, <http://www.evangelsociety.org/francisco/northkoreapf.html>, (May 27, 2003), p.1.

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²⁴ There is always a danger that quality of effort may become reduced when priority shifts elsewhere. It is absolutely imperative that the quality of officers sent to staff these billets be maintained at the highest possible levels.

²⁵ North Korea has no history of conducting or supporting terrorist activities outside the Pacific Rim and there is no reason to suggest otherwise. As with all security intentions, events in North Korea must be continuously monitored and appropriate actions taken should undesirable trends emerge.

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